



RULES
// **OF THE**
COMMUNIST
PARTY

As revised at the
20th National Congress
February, 1948

THE RULES

1. NAME

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

2. AIMS

The aim of the Communist Party is to achieve a Socialist Britain, in which the public ownership of the means of production and exchange shall replace the existing capitalist system.

Only a Socialist Britain, co-operating with all other peoples of the world in close, friendly, free and equal association, will be able so to plan the use of all Britain's material, productive and scientific resources, that every citizen will be guaranteed security, the right to work and leisure, a steadily rising standard of living, liberty and equal opportunity for a full and happy life.

Believing that this aim can be attained only by the will of the great majority of the people, led by the organised working class, the Party shall:—

(a) Work to strengthen the organisation, political understanding and activity of workers by hand and brain for the advancement of their standards and conditions and the achievement of Socialism.

(b) Co-operate with all other sections of the Labour movement to win support for the realisation of our common aims.

(c) Work to preserve, develop and utilise to the fullest extent the democratic rights of public speech, press, assembly, organisation, representation in Parliament, Local Government and other public bodies, in order to advance the best interests of

the people and secure a Government truly representative of the majority of the nation.

(d) Support the aspirations of all peoples in the British Empire to choose the form of Government under which they will live.

(e) Support the aspirations of the peoples of all countries to secure freedom, democratic rights and social progress throughout the world, as the basis for the development of economic and social co-operation for the benefit of all nations and the maintenance of peace.

3. MEMBERSHIP

(a) Membership shall be open to persons of eighteen years and upwards who agree with the aims of the Party, pay their dues regularly, and work in a Party organisation.

(b) Membership dues shall be 1s. 4d. per month, of which 4d. goes to the Branch, 6d. to the District Committee, and 6d. to the E.C., together with a levy of 4d. per quarter for a Central Election Fund. Membership dues for unemployed members, housewives, and old-age pensioners, should be 8d. per month, of which 2d. goes to the Branch, 3d. to the District Committee, and 3d. to the E.C., together with a levy of 2d. per quarter for a Central Election Fund.

(c) Members have not only the right but the duty to take part in the formation of the policy of the Party through their Party organisation, and in the election of all leading Committees.

(d) Every member shall belong to and assist in the work of his or her appropriate Trade Union or professional organisation and Co-operative Society.

(e) Members, with the assistance of the Party, shall strive to improve their political knowledge

and understanding of Marxist theory, to equip themselves to take an active and helpful part in the working-class movement, and win support for the aims and policy of the Party.

(f) Action against any member guilty of breaches of Party Rules or any other conduct detrimental to the Party shall be carried out according to the following procedure:

The **Party Branch** shall have the power to remove from office, to suspend for a period not exceeding three months, or to recommend to the District Committee expulsion, on the decision of a simple majority of the members attending a branch meeting where the member concerned has been given the opportunity of attending and stating his case.

The **Borough or Area Committee** shall have the power to remove from office, to suspend for a period not exceeding three months, or to recommend to the District Committee expulsion, provided that the reason for such action has been explained to a meeting of members of the Party organisation concerned, at which opportunity has been given to the member to be present and state his case.

The **Executive Committee or District Committee** shall have the power to expel, remove from office, or suspend for a period of three months, and shall explain the reason for this action to a meeting of the Party organisation concerned.

APPEAL

A member against whom any action has been taken under this rule shall have the right of appeal from a decision of a Party Branch or of a

Borough or Area Committee to the District Committee.

A member shall have a right of appeal against a decision of a District Committee to the Executive Committee, and a further right of appeal against a decision of the Executive Committee to the Appeals Committee.

A decision of the Appeals Committee (which shall be reported to the Executive Committee) shall be final, save that a member may appeal to the next National Congress of the Party. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be operative unless and until it is reversed by National Congress.

Any appeal under this Rule shall be made in writing to the appropriate body within fourteen days of the member being notified of the decision appealed against.

4. THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

(a) The National Congress shall be the supreme authority of the Party, and be responsible for the adoption of general policy and for laying down the general lines of the work of the Party and of its Executive Committee. The National Congress shall elect, from nominations made by Branches and District Committees, an Executive Committee, an Appeals Committee of not more than seven members, and two Auditors to audit the Party accounts to be submitted to the next Congress. Members of the Appeals Committee and the Auditors shall not be members of the Executive Committee.

(b) The National Congress shall be convened by the Executive Committee biennially and composed of delegates from District Committees and from the Branches, elected in accordance with their

numerical strength, on a basis determined by the Executive Committee.

(c) The Agenda and preliminary materials for the Congress shall be issued to Party organisations two months before the date fixed for the Congress, and shall be considered and discussed by all Party organisations and members. Resolutions for the Congress agenda, or amendments to draft resolutions issued by the Executive Committee, may be sent in by Party Branches and District Committees up to four weeks before the date of the Congress.

5. SPECIAL NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Upon a request from not less than one-third of the District Committees, or one-fifth of the Branches, the Executive Committee shall convene a Special National Conference. A Special National Conference may also be convened by the Executive Committee at any time. Special National Conferences shall be composed in the same way and have the same powers as the National Congress.

6. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(a) The Executive Committee shall have full responsibility for the direction and control of the Party's work, and for the formulation of current policy, in accordance with the decisions of National Congresses.

(b) It shall assist the work of Party members elected to Parliament, direct and control the Party press, publications and other Party enterprises, and manage the central funds of the Party.

(c) It shall elect such Officers and Committees as it may consider necessary to ensure the most efficient organisation and carrying through of the Party's work.

7. DISTRICTS

(a) Districts shall be constituted by the Executive Committee in suitable geographical and industrial areas. A biennial District Congress shall be convened by each District Committee, and composed of delegates from all Branches in the District, in accordance with their numerical strength, on a basis determined by the District Committee in consultation with the Executive Committee. In Districts where Area or Borough Committees exist, representation from these bodies can be decided at the discretion of the District Committee.

(b) The District Committee shall be elected by the District Congress. It shall guide the work of Party organisations within the District, assist Party members elected to Local Government and other public bodies; direct and control District Party enterprises, and manage the District funds of the Party.

(c) The District Committee, in agreement with the Executive Committee, may constitute and provide for the election of Area, City or Borough Committees, and determine the constitution and function of these bodies.

8. BRANCHES

(a) Branches shall be organised on the authority of the District Committee. A Branch shall comprise members living, or in some cases working, within a defined area.

A District Committee, in agreement with the Executive Committee, may constitute a branch of members employed at a particular place of work.

(b) The Annual meeting of the Branch shall elect the Branch Committee, which shall consider and decide upon applications for membership, guide

the work of the Party groups and Party members within the Branch, direct and control the Branch Party enterprises, and manage the Branch funds.

(c) The Branch Committee shall be responsible for ensuring the organised political work of Party members, using such measures as full meetings of members in industrial undertakings as well as in the wards and streets. In the case of large enterprises the direction of the work may be undertaken by the Borough, Area or District Committee.

9. RULES

The Executive Committee shall have authority to interpret these Rules, and to lay down procedure in all matters not specifically covered by them.

The Rules may be amended by the vote of a simple majority of delegates at a National Congress, provided that the following procedure has been carried out:

- (i) All proposed alterations to rule shall be submitted by the Executive Committee, Party Branches or District Committees, not later than three months before the date of the National Congress.
- (ii) The Executive Committee shall consider all such proposed alterations, and shall circulate these, together with its recommendations, as part of the material for the National Congress.